

# What are some of the lessons learned?



# Building Partnerships

**No single group can build an after-school program alone.**

## **Collaborative planning:**

- **Increases capacity of groups to work together**
- **Builds trust and shared identity**
- **Encourages involvement from diverse organizations**
- **Builds school and community ownership**
- **Builds growth and support for funding**
- **Drives sustainability**



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# **Building Partnerships**

**There are a lot of resources...**

## **Parents**

## **Children and Youth**

## **Education Community**

Principals

Teachers

School-Community Coalitions

PTAs

Superintendents

School Boards

School support staff

Literacy organizations

Local colleges/universities

## **Community/Business Organizations**

Community based organizations

(Kiwanis, Lions, Masons, 4H, Y's, Scouts, etc.)

Parks/recreation departments

Juvenile justice agencies

Police/Sheriff Departments

Family/juvenile courts

Child welfare agencies

Social service agencies

Faith-based organizations

Libraries & museums

Chambers of Commerce

Small & large businesses

Business partners

Non-profits

Senior citizen/retiree groups

# ***Principals of Effective Partnerships ...***

- Plan together from the start
- Clarify the goals
- Take time to know one another
- Set ground rules
- Start small and build gradually
- Clarify and reclarify roles and responsibilities
- Share decision-making
- Prepare team members to work together
- Stay flexible
- Keep tending the relationship

***The great secret of successful collaboration  
is this:***

**The only agreement you have to have is  
on what you are all going to do.**

**----Michael Gilbert**

# Governance and Planning

- ✓ The beginning players affect the governance structure.
- ✓ There may be a tradeoff – *quick start* (small set of stakeholders) or *long-term sustainability* (inclusive planning process).
- ✓ Build a set of shared goals – remain focused on the “big picture”.
- ✓ Build personal relationships.

# Some Additional Thoughts

- Two most important words...

Collaborate, Collaborate, Collaborate, and  
Leverage, Leverage, Leverage

- Ongoing process of forming partnerships & building resources
- It takes time and perseverance
- Develop MOUs with partners
- Learn your school culture
- Meet with your partners monthly – Group & Individual
- Recognize/Honor your partners often
- Don't neglect your local businesses/employers
- Sweat the small stuff

## **Collaboration Principles:**

From Karen L. Mapp, Ed.D.

### **“Everything you wanted to know about 21st Century Collaborations but were afraid to ask...”**

How do we create a 21st Century Community Learning Center Collaboration?

#### **1. Start with a *preliminary* vision.**

- Develop a preliminary vision for what the program might look like.
- Think broadly, “outside of the box.”

#### **2. Conduct a self-needs assessment:**

- Identify what resources your organization brings to the table.
- Identify resource gaps that need to be filled
- Identify additional partners for collaboration

#### **3. Bring in a diverse group of people:**

- A thoughtful collaborative process includes a broad range of players from public schools and community based organizations as well as those who have typically been under-represented in the traditional decision making process- such as parents, students, minority groups, and members of economically distress communities.

- Invite, from the start, those most likely to challenge your efforts.
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#### **4. Create a culture of partnership:**

- Bring people together in an inclusive, rather than hierarchical setting. An inclusive setting encourages “buy-in” and sets the tone for a culture of partnership.
- Acknowledge and respect the voices and contributions of all your partners.
- Avoid jargon and “exclusive language.”

#### **5. Create a shared vision**

- Partners create a set of shared guiding principles as a framework for interaction and understanding.
- Partners set realistic goals and timelines

#### **6. Outline roles and responsibilities**

- Decide what is expected of the partners
- Agree on and document roles and responsibilities—create a memorandum of understanding for each partner
- Stay flexible and willing to adapt to changes in roles when required
- Develop a shared system of governance and decision-making

## **7. Create timetables and guidelines**

- Develop timetables that set realistic goals and guidelines for your collaboration.
- The collaborative process takes time; be careful of over-committing and over-promising.

## **8. Build in opportunities for evaluation and assessment of your collaboration**

- Document your results
- Set up reporting and data gathering systems from the beginning
- Develop a mechanism for sharing your results with others

**Two important resources:**

**Beyond the Bell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Learning Point Associates**  
**[www.learningpoint.org](http://www.learningpoint.org)**

**Moving Towards Success: Framework for After-School Programs**  
**Collaborative Communications Group**  
**[www.publicengagement.com/Framework](http://www.publicengagement.com/Framework)**